



HIV Among Foreign-Born Residents of King County

Summary: Although the vast majority of HIV-infected residents of King County were born in the United States or territories, about 10% were born in other countries. Foreign-born persons are more likely to be of minority race. Specifically among blacks, the distribution of infection by sex and mode of transmission are quite different for U.S.-born and foreign-born residents of King County. Finally, the proportion of new HIV diagnoses among foreign-born blacks is increasing. Therefore, understanding the HIV epidemic among foreign-born blacks is important for targeting prevention efforts among this community.

Status: The proportion of HIV-infected King County residents who are foreign-born is higher among minority races. One-half of Asians (57%) and Hispanics (52%), and one-quarter of Blacks (23%) were born in countries other than the U.S. Among Whites, 2% are foreign-born.

The proportion who are female is also higher among foreign-born. Whereas 8% of U.S. born HIV-infected persons are female, 21% of foreign-born are female. The rates are similar for Asian, Hispanic, and White foreign-born populations (14%), while the percentage female is much higher for the foreign-born Black population (38%).

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Am Indian
Total Number	3267	733	405	105	84
Foreign-Born	2%	23%	52%	57%	1%
U.S. Born	98%	77%	48%	43%	99%
Proportion female	5%	26%	10%	13%	25%

The mode of HIV exposure also differs substantially between the U.S. and foreign-born infected persons. Among the U.S. born, over three-quarters of infections are among MSM (77%), followed by MSM & IDU (10%), IDU (8%), and heterosexual transmission (4%). Fifty-one percent of the foreign-born contracted HIV through MSM, with 77% of Whites, 67% of Hispanics, and 74% of Asians so infected. Heterosexual transmission accounts for 36% of infection among the foreign-born, with 8% of Whites, 16% of Hispanics, and 17% of Asians infected through heterosexual transmission. The distributions are quite different for Blacks, however. Among foreign-born Blacks, 57% of infections occurring through heterosexual activity, another 34% are undetermined exposure, and only 8% occurring through MSM. In addition, 37% of foreign-born Blacks with HIV are female, compared to 23% of U.S.-born Blacks.

Another way to demonstrate the marked difference is to consider that Blacks born outside the U.S. make up just 3% of the total HIV-infected population in King County, but 30% of all heterosexual-acquired infections.

King County Residents Living with HIV Infection 12/31/2002			
	Blacks Born Outside U.S.	Blacks Born In U.S.	All Others
Total	171	499	4445
SEX			
Male	63%	77%	93%
Female	37%	23%	7%
MODE OF EXPOSURE			
Men who have sex with Men	6%	46%	75%
Injection Drug Use	1%	19%	6%
MSM and IDU	0%	6%	10%
Blood Exposure	1%	1%	1%
Heterosexual	57%	13%	4%
Born to HIV+ Mother	1%	2%	0%
Undetermined	34%	14%	5%

Trends: The proportion of HIV cases among blacks who are foreign-born has increased over the past several years, from 2% of all persons diagnosed 1994-96, to 9% of persons diagnosed 2000-02 (see figure below).

